

CLAIMS:

1. A method for harvesting an artery comprising:
providing a long slender rod with a handle on one end and a sideways hook on the other end; and
manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery; and pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.
3. A method for separating or dissecting an artery from surrounding tissue, said method comprising:
providing a long slender rod with a handle on one end and a sideways hook on the other end; and
manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery and engage the artery with the hook; and
separating the artery by pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.
5. A method for harvesting an artery from the body, said method comprising; making a small incision in the skin in the vicinity of the artery;
providing a long slender rod with a handle on one end and a sideways

hook on the other end; and

inserting the hooked end of the rod into the small incision until the hooked end is in the vicinity of the artery; and

manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery; and

pushing and or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery from surrounding tissue.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

7. A method of harvesting an artery, said method comprising: making an incision through the skin in the vicinity of the artery; inserting a tunneling device into the incision to create a tunnel along the artery;

insufflating the tunnel by placing a seal at the incision, and injecting gas or liquid through the seal;

providing a long slender rod with a handle end and a hooked end, said hooked end having a sideways extending hook near its distal tip;

inserting the rod, hooked end first, into the tunnel through the seal; manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery;

pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery from its surrounding tissue.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:
providing the long slender rod with a long tube surrounding the rod, said tube extending over a longitudinal segment of the rod, said tube mated to the rod in an airtight manner to inhibit air or fluid from flowing between the tube and the rod;
inserting the long slender rod, with the long tube surrounding the rod, into the tunnel through the seal.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of providing the long slender rod with a means for sealing any space between the rod and the seal to inhibit the flow of gas or fluid between the rod and the seal.

11. A method for harvesting a artery from the body, said method comprising;
making a small incision in the skin in the vicinity of the artery;
providing an endoscopic forceps and a short length of soft flexible material; and threading the short length of soft flexible material around the artery and grasping the material at both ends with the endoscopic graspers, thereby forming a loop around the artery; and
pushing and or pulling the forceps, while grasping the soft flexible material, to slide the loop along the artery to separate the artery from surrounding tissue.